

CORRECTIONS

On the matter of corrections, I had recommended that we set aside \$125 million for the projects contemplated in Senate File 16 and another \$4 million for projects funded through the general state construction program.

While the Appropriations Committee did not follow all of this recommendation, they did recommend paying off a similar amount of prison construction bond indebtedness, and they did provide the funding for the new prison. There is about \$67 million that we would have set aside for the construction of the new prison in terms of cash. Instead of doing that, the Appropriations Committee chose to pay off a similar amount of debt. Now, I'm not sure that their approach isn't just as valid as mine, the distinction being as follows: I believe that their expectation is that revenues will go up and that we'll have the cash available. And while I want to hope for that, I believe that it is a bit more revenue-optimistic than I am prepared to be. There are differences, but they are different ways to get to the same goal. The Appropriations Committee invests \$125, \$127 million in corrections; my budget did \$129 or \$128. The fact of the matter is, we're both headed to the point of trying to address a long-standing need in the corrections process, and I just don't see a great deal to be gained by arguing about it.

MILITARY

I want to recognize a part of the Wyoming family that has been called upon to bear a special burden for our state and for this nation in the ongoing military conflict. To those from whom the ultimate sacrifice has been demanded and to their families, we extend our admiration, our prayers and our appreciation. To those now deployed or who are preparing to deploy and to their families who remain behind, our prayers and thanks are given without reservation. I ask that you join me in recognizing Adjutant General Wright and four family members of deployed guardsmen who are here today. They are here today on behalf of hundreds of Wyoming families and soldiers.

I know that there's an additional deployment planned while you are in session and we are trying to make arrangements to fly those legislators who are interested in attending to participate in them.